



Joint FE Trade Union Pay Claim for 2009/10

Context

The Further Education trade unions submit their pay claim for FE Pay in England for 2009/10 in the context of an economic environment that is placing increased focus on the importance of FE to the economic life of the nation. The trade unions are extremely concerned about the impact of the recession on the wider economy and recognise the vital role FE will play in helping people re-skill. We are clear therefore that FE will not be affected in the same way as other sectors and indeed has an important role in assisting the victims of economic turmoil, both individuals and businesses.

Government have publicly acknowledged the important and positive role that FE will play in the current climate and indeed have committed extra funds to the sector to support this. With the background of publicly funded multi-million pound banking bailouts and bonuses, the FE trade unions do not accept that staff working in FE colleges, playing a vital role in helping economic recovery, should be called upon to show pay restraint. After years of below inflation pay awards the current context for FE creates an opportunity to address its declining real wages and conditions and the long running pay gap with school teachers.

Pay

The statistics on pay for FE continue to tell a story of declining real wages and a persistent pay gap with school teachers. The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) show that average earnings across the economy have risen 47% in the decade to 2008 and by 41.3% in the public sector for the same period however pay for FE lecturers and college managers has only increased 21.9% in that time. Since the implementation of the harmonised pay spine in August 2005 prices have increased 17.5% while AoC recommended increases to pay and allowances only total 10.2% resulting in a real pay cut to staff in FE of 7.3% in that time. The ASHE survey shows the gap in pay between school teachers and FE lecturers and managers remains stubbornly high with FE employees still 6% behind.

It is widely understood that the lowest paid spend a higher proportion of their income on basics such as housing, fuel, food and utility costs. The downward pressures on inflation have mainly come from items other than the fuel, food and utility costs which have showed significant increases in recent years, 10.4% on food and 14.7% on utilities over the year to December 2008. For the lowest paid no benefits from falling interest rates and housing prices have been felt as they have long been priced out of home owning and are now hit by the increases in rent associated with the housing sales slump.

We therefore call on the AoC to recommend that colleges pay:

- **A 6% increase in salaries and allowances from 1 August 2009 with a £2000 underpinning.**

Excessive Working hours

In a 2008 survey of UCU members on the subject of stress, 40% of respondents cited excessive workloads as the most significant cause of stress or frustration. The three next highest factors cited all related to not having enough time to do the job properly and maintaining a healthy work life balance.

Surveys of members carried out in 2004 and 2007 by ACM showed similar results. Indeed, the 2007 survey found that 64.5% of ACM members worked in excess of an average of 48 hours per week, and some 16.5% worked in excess of 60 hours per week. This is almost unchanged from the 2004 ACM survey when the corresponding figures were 63% and 17%. In addition, the 2007 ACM survey looked at potential sources of stress and found that high demands made in respect of workload and targets was reported by four out of five ACM members, with just 18% saying their workloads were reasonable.

The Learning and Skills Network survey of FE staff satisfaction showed that over 92% of FE staff work beyond their contracted hours and just under 50% are unable to achieve a satisfactory work/life balance. All categories of staff were represented amongst those working above contracted hours with 29% of lecturers working more than 11 hours above contracted hours, 38% of managers and 63% of senior managers.

The cost of stress related health problems and absences caused by excessive workloads to colleges and the inevitable negative impacts this must have on learning outcomes makes this a situation that can not continue.

We therefore call on the AoC to recommend that colleges negotiate a :

- **Reduction in excessive working hours with the introduction of a maximum 35 hour working week.**

Staff Development

The sector must ensure that all college staff are equipped to rise to the challenges of the ambitious skills agenda. If colleges are to be exemplars in the drive to meet the Leitch proposals for workforce skills they need to fully embed staff training.

The Trade Unions believe the current level of training provided to college support staff is unacceptable. In fact only an embarrassingly low number of colleges have even signed up to the Skills Pledge.

We therefore call on the AoC to recommend that colleges:

- **Provide all college staff the option to undertake 30 hours a year paid training entitlement with release from normal duties.**

Outsourced Services

We remain very concerned at the continuing high levels of casualisation in the sector, with large amounts of provision delivered by an insecure and still marginalized workforce. We view this as having serious implications for the quality of service particularly given the scale of outsourcing and the growing use of agency staff in many colleges.

We therefore call on the AoC to agree a joint national agreement on outsourced services that recommends colleges:

- **Ensure existing contactors agree to pay all their college staff in-house terms and conditions.**
- **Begin immediate negotiations to bring all outsourced services back in house.**

Annual Leave

College support staff are on the whole employed on inferior terms and conditions of employment compared to lectures. No where is this more apparent than in annual leave provisions. In the interests of fairness and equality we are calling on the AoC to recommend that all colleges:

- **Harmonise (upwards) annual leave for support and academic staff with no detriment.**

Independent Safeguarding Authority

From July 2010 the Independent Safeguarding Authority's new Vetting and Barring scheme will replace the existing arrangements covered by the Protection of Vulnerable Adults, Protection of Children's Act and List 99.

Staff moving into a new role after this date paid or voluntary will need to join the scheme before starting that role. It is envisaged that the whole workforce will be phased into the scheme over a five year period.

The ISA registration fee is £64 in England and Wales. The fee will be a one-off-payment and is intended to cover the applicant for the duration of their career. The majority of individuals who will come under the ISA scheme are women, many work part time and a large number are low paid workers. The trade unions strongly believe the £64 fee should not be borne by individuals but should be incorporated into recruitment costs by employers. The Trade unions therefore call on the AoC to:

- **Recommended that colleges cover the cost of the ISA registration fee for all their staff**

Full Implementation of the 2003/05 Modernising Pay and subsequent Agreements

After more than four years 40% of FE colleges have still to implement the 2003/05 Modernising Pay Agreement. The refusal of such a significant minority of colleges to honour a deal made in good faith undermines the credibility of National Bargaining. The good faith of AoC negotiators is further called into question when high profile NJF employer panel

members fail to set a positive example by implementing an agreement they made in their own college.

Staff at colleges that have yet to implement the modernising pay agreement are receiving significantly inferior salaries to their counterparts in colleges that have implemented. This is creating increasing problems of staff turnover and poor morale which will continue to worsen and boil over into industrial action if serious steps are not taken to extend implementation of these agreements to all who work in FE.

Very few of the colleges that have moved staff onto the harmonised pay scale have conducted the Further Education Job Evaluation Scheme leaving many staff on fixed salary points or with unfair bars to progression.

A survey conducted by the Trade Union side has found that 35% (of 188 colleges responding) failed to implement in full the 2008/09 pay deal.

The Trade unions therefore call on the AoC to:

- **Take serious and meaningful steps to ensure implementation of the 2003/04 modernising pay agreement and subsequent pay agreements including underpinning arrangements, full progression within salary grades and Job Evaluation**

Fractional contracts for part-time staff

The proliferation of casual employment contracts in FE does nothing to support efforts to improve quality and learning outcomes by reducing security for both learners and staff. The overuse of casual contracts runs counter to existing joint agreements on the employment of both part-time and fixed-term staff. It is unlawful to treat part-time and fixed-term staff in a less favourable way and yet vast numbers of these staff across FE are stuck on fixed points or pay scales that do not allow for their full progression in the same way as full-time and permanent staff.

The Trade unions therefore call on the AoC to:

- **Recommend the transfer of all part-time staff to directly employed fractional posts.**